

NASA Astrobiology Academy

Ames Research Center, Moffett Field, California

Week 3 of the Academy July 9th - July 16th, 2001

Written by:

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This week marked the beginning of Andy's payback for Ma Chough (Natacha Chough) being on primary pager duty all week during Tahoe while he escaped for a wedding. Thus, this summary is the first piece of work Ma-Chough has done all week. J This was also an eventful week for Tom because he finally met his Principle Investigator for the first time: the esteemed Dr. David Des Marais.

Monday:

We went back to work after 5 days of teambuilding, tours, talks in Tahoe. 'Twas a rude awakening. Chris McKay was our lunch speaker on Monday and used the work of some really awesome philosophers to explain the ethical implications of terraforming Mars. We also learned about representing NASA and how to properly dispose of certain wastes to avoid certain harmful effects.

Tuesday:

Tuesday was also a full day of PI work, followed by a riveting evening lecture by Dr. David Morrison, Director of Astrobiology and Space at NASA Ames. Morrison spoke of the asteroid-impact history on Earth and thanks to his insights, the NAABA2K+1 crew is now better equipped to save our planet from global destruction (or at least understand and assess the risks). In addition we also learned that Armageddon and Deep Impact need much better science editors.

Wednesday:

Wednesday was a productive day for the group project. During the update meeting, the biology sub-group narrowed down selections for bacterial species. And the engineering sub-group gave an update on the hardware, discussing chamber options and meeting with a possible equipment donor.

Thursday:

The leaders of the group project met with staff for an update on works in progress. All in all, the meeting went very well, and STAFF EXPECTS GREAT THINGS FROM THEM IN WEEKS TO COME, ESPECIALLY FOR THE MIDTERM PRESENTATION. In the evening. John Parker Stuart. a

boisterous consultant for Lockheed Martin, spoke with us about the principles of leadership and lent his gems of wisdom to us for our future careers. While this was going on, Tom was held up in the lab with his twenty-four-hour diel experiment (which he only participated in eighteen hours of).

Friday:

Friday morning consisted of more PI time. After lunch, the Academy went on a tour of the Ames campus. Who knew we worked in such a cool place?!?! We toured a ninety-day bed rest facility (complete with the "human car wash"), a virtual reality lab for bioinformatics, a four-story vertical motion simulator, the 20-g centrifuge, the Mars robotics lab, and a biosensors lab. We discovered the diversity of the Ames research topics.

Saturday:

On Friday night and Saturday morning, the RA's dispersed on our very first free weekend. Several had dates/getaways with their significant, while others experienced the expensive lifestyle of Silicon Valley by attempting to go shopping, and others enjoyed the amazing terrain of northern California.

Sunday:

A few went to see the last showing of "Rent" after stuffing themselves @ Ming's Dim-Sum. Later others gathered to watch "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and eat Thai food. All returned to the Phi Sig house at the end of the night to start work refreshed on Monday morning, except Natcho, who had to wake up in the middle of the night to pick up Mr. Brad "Ernesto" Bailey at the SFO airport at 2:30 a.m. And the week begins anew...

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